

CHECKLIST ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Project Name: Trailsend Ranch Irrigation Head Gate LUL#3071013
Proposed Implementation Date: February 2012
Proponent: Trailsend Ranch
Location: Section 16, T4S, R6W
County: Madison

I. TYPE AND PURPOSE OF ACTION

The proponent has requested the DNRC to issue a Land Use License for the regarding of an existing irrigation ditch (Eastman Ditch) and install 2, 36" screw type head gates and a cutthroat measuring devise on state trust land.

II. PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

1. PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT, AGENCIES, GROUPS OR INDIVIDUALS CONTACTED:

Provide a brief chronology of the scoping and ongoing involvement for this project.

Scoping notices were sent to the Lessee, DNRC Archaeologist Patrick Rennie, DNRC Hydrologist Dennis Meyer, and the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks Biologist Matthew Jaeger.

2. OTHER GOVERNMENTAL AGENCIES WITH JURISDICTION, LIST OF PERMITS NEEDED:

Conservation District 310 permit obtained.

3. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED:

No Action Alternative: A Land Use License would be denied for the re-grading of an irrigation ditch (Eastman Ditch) and the installation of 2, 36" screw type Head gates and a cutthroat measuring device.

Action Alternative: Grant Trailsend Ranch a LUL to re-grade of an irrigation ditch (Eastman Ditch) and install 2, 36" screw type Head gates and a cutthroat measuring device on state trust land.

III. IMPACTS ON THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

- *RESOURCES potentially impacted are listed on the form, followed by common issues that would be considered.*
- *Explain POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATIONS following each resource heading.*
- *Enter "NONE" If no impacts are identified or the resource is not present.*

4. GEOLOGY AND SOIL QUALITY, STABILITY AND MOISTURE:

Consider the presence of fragile, compactable or unstable soils. Identify unusual geologic features. Specify any special reclamation considerations. Identify any cumulative impacts to soils.

Soil disturbance will occur as a result of regarding the existing irrigation ditch, and head gate installation. Rip-rap will be installed at the head gate at the confluence of the Beaverhead River and the ditch to prevent erosion of the head gate and river bank. Disturbed soil will be seeded with grass to prevent erosion. No adverse effects are anticipated.

5. WATER QUALITY, QUANTITY AND DISTRIBUTION:

Identify important surface or groundwater resources. Consider the potential for violation of ambient water quality standards, drinking water maximum contaminant levels, or degradation of water quality. Identify cumulative effects to water resources.

The irrigation ditch and head gate will be installed while the ditch is dry. Some short term silting may be seen as a result downstream from the project area. New head gate should improve water quality and distribution in the long term.

6. AIR QUALITY:

What pollutants or particulate would be produced? Identify air quality regulations or zones (e.g. Class I air shed) the project would influence. Identify cumulative effects to air quality.

No adverse effects to air quality are anticipated as a result of the project.

7. VEGETATION COVER, QUANTITY AND QUALITY:

What changes would the action cause to vegetative communities? Consider rare plants or cover types that would be affected. Identify cumulative effects to vegetation.

Short-term disturbance to vegetative cover may occur where the head gate is installed and vegetation is disturbed as a result of cleaning the ditch. Knapweed and leafy spurge are known to exist in the area. Licensee shall insure noxious weeds are controlled in areas of disturbance.

8. TERRESTRIAL, AVIAN AND AQUATIC LIFE AND HABITATS:

Consider substantial habitat values and use of the area by wildlife, birds or fish. Identify cumulative effects to fish and wildlife.

Some silting is expected in the ditch itself. No adverse effects to terrestrial, avian or aquatic life are anticipated as a result of this project. Montana Fish, Wildlife and Park biologist Matt Jaeger commented that he had no concerns with the proposed ditch, as it is an improvement of the current ditch and not an additional ditch added to the Beaverhead River.

9. UNIQUE, ENDANGERED, FRAGILE OR LIMITED ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES:

Consider any federally listed threatened or endangered species or habitat identified in the project area. Determine effects to wetlands. Consider Sensitive Species or Species of special concern. Identify cumulative effects to these species and their habitat.

The Natural Resource Heritage program has documented observances of Arctic Grayling in the nearby Beaverhead River. This project is on an existing irrigation ditch and is not expected to have any adverse effects to fish in the river. Birds of concern include Bald Eagle, Blue Heron, and Long-billed Curlew. This project is not expected to have any adverse effects on these species. Three plants have been identified in the general area, they include Indian Paintbrush, Mealy Primrose and Ute Ladies' Tresses. This project is not expected to have any long term effect to these species as it is on an existing irrigation ditch.

10. HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES:

Identify and determine effects to historical, archaeological or paleontological resources.

DNRC Archaeologist, Patrick Rennie has been notified of the project area. No archaeological sites have been identified in the project area. The project is for an irrigation ditch that has been in existence since the 1870's.

11. AESTHETICS:

Determine if the project is located on a prominent topographic feature, or may be visible from populated or scenic areas. What level of noise, light or visual change would be produced? Identify cumulative effects to aesthetics.

No adverse effects are anticipated as a result of this project. Project is not visible from populated areas, or traveled corridors.

12. DEMANDS ON ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES OF LAND, WATER, AIR OR ENERGY:

Determine the amount of limited resources the project would require. Identify other activities nearby that the project would affect. Identify cumulative effects to environmental resources.

The project is for an existing irrigation ditch and should not pose any additional demands on water from the Beaverhead River.

13. OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTS PERTINENT TO THE AREA:

List other studies, plans or projects on this tract. Determine cumulative impacts likely to occur as a result of current private, state or federal actions in the analysis area, and from future proposed state actions in the analysis area that are under MEPA review (scoped) or permitting review by any state agency.

No know permitting or environmental review is currently occurring at this location.

IV. IMPACTS ON THE HUMAN POPULATION

- *RESOURCES potentially impacted are listed on the form, followed by common issues that would be considered.*
- *Explain POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATIONS following each resource heading.*
- *Enter "NONE" if no impacts are identified or the resource is not present.*

14. HUMAN HEALTH AND SAFETY:

Identify any health and safety risks posed by the project.

No adverse effects are anticipated as a result of this project.

15. INDUSTRIAL, COMMERCIAL AND AGRICULTURE ACTIVITIES AND PRODUCTION:

Identify how the project would add to or alter these activities.

This project would increase the efficiency of the current irrigation ditch for agricultural use.

16. QUANTITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF EMPLOYMENT:

Estimate the number of jobs the project would create, move or eliminate. Identify cumulative effects to the employment market.

No jobs are expected to be created as a result of the project.

17. LOCAL AND STATE TAX BASE AND TAX REVENUES:

Estimate tax revenue the project would create or eliminate. Identify cumulative effects to taxes and revenue.

None anticipated

18. DEMAND FOR GOVERNMENT SERVICES:

Estimate increases in traffic and changes to traffic patterns. What changes would be needed to fire protection, police, schools, etc.? Identify cumulative effects of this and other projects on government services.

No adverse effects are anticipated as a result of this project.

19. LOCALLY ADOPTED ENVIRONMENTAL PLANS AND GOALS:

List State, County, City, USFS, BLM, Tribal, and other zoning or management plans, and identify how they would affect this project.

None anticipated that would affect this project.

20. ACCESS TO AND QUALITY OF RECREATIONAL AND WILDERNESS ACTIVITIES:

Identify any wilderness or recreational areas nearby or access routes through this tract. Determine the effects of the project on recreational potential within the tract. Identify cumulative effects to recreational and wilderness activities.

None

21. DENSITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION AND HOUSING:

Estimate population changes and additional housing the project would require. Identify cumulative effects to population and housing.

None

22. SOCIAL STRUCTURES AND MORES:

Identify potential disruption of native or traditional lifestyles or communities.

None

23. CULTURAL UNIQUENESS AND DIVERSITY:

How would the action affect any unique quality of the area?

None

24. OTHER APPROPRIATE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CIRCUMSTANCES:

Estimate the return to the trust. Include appropriate economic analysis. Identify potential future uses for the analysis area other than existing management. Identify cumulative economic and social effects likely to occur as a result of the proposed action.

The proposed action has provided \$25 via a Land Use License application fee and there will be a onetime fee of \$150.00 for the regarding and head gate installation if the proposal is approved.

EA Checklist Prepared By:	Name: Donald Copple	Date: 02/21/2012
	Title: Fire Supervisor	

V. FINDING

25. ALTERNATIVE SELECTED:

Action Alternative: Grant Trailsend Ranch a LUL to re-grade an irrigation ditch (Eastman Ditch) and install 2, 36" screw type Head gates and a cutthroat measuring device on state trust land.

26. SIGNIFICANCE OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS:

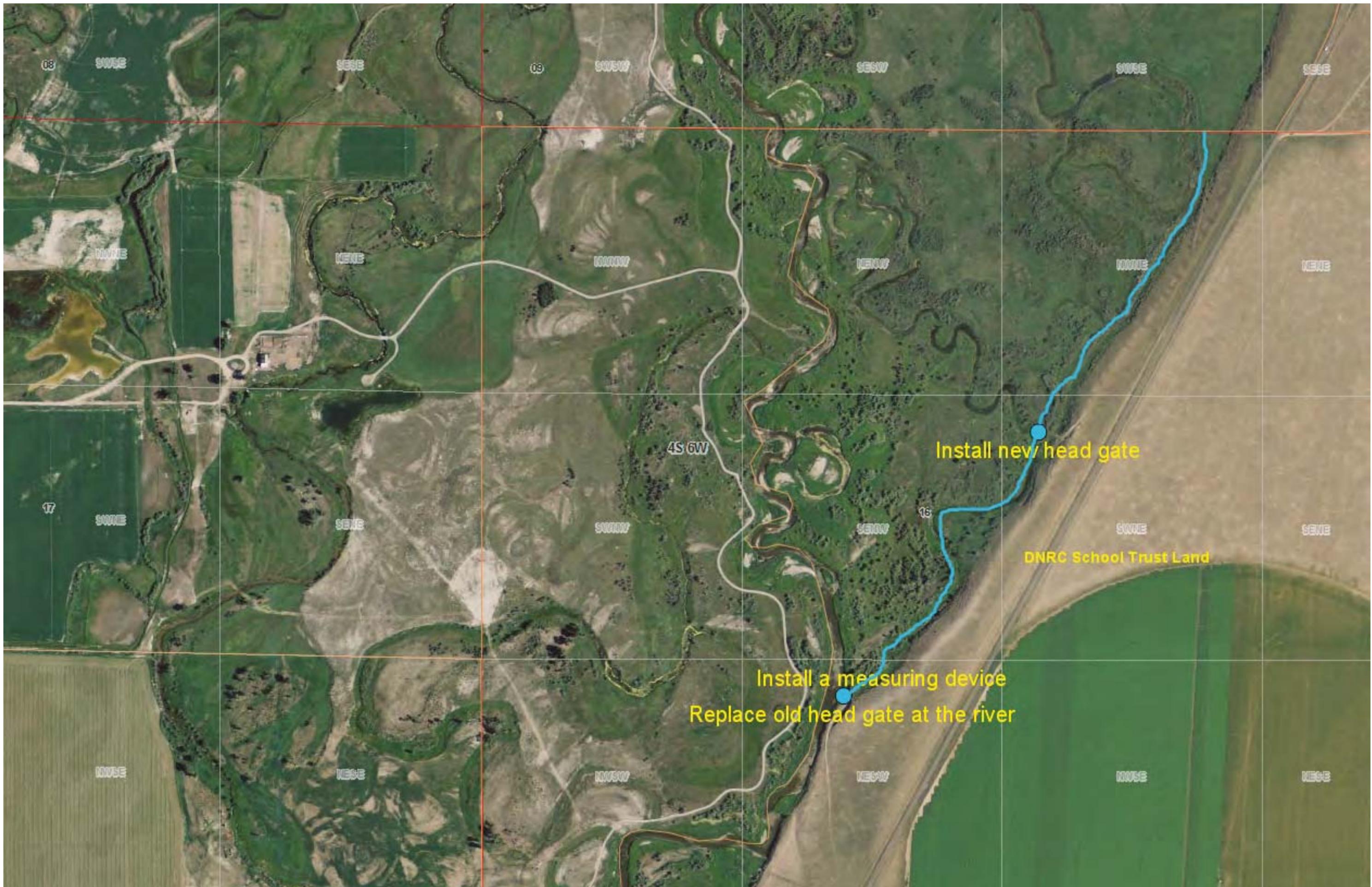
No long term impacts are anticipated from this proposal. The Eastman Ditch dates back to the 1870's and no long term impacts has resulted from the use of the ditch. Cleaning and regarding of the ditch will allow easier flow of water through the ditch and the new head gates will allow greater control of the quantity of flow. The proponent had already started the work on state land prior to contacting the DNRC for the LUL. Work will resume once the license has been approved and paid for.

The proponent will be responsible for obtaining a signed weed management plan for the project from Beaverhead County.

27. NEED FOR FURTHER ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:

EIS More Detailed EA No Further Analysis

EA Checklist Approved By:	Name: Timothy Egan
	Title: Dillon Unit Manager
Signature: /S/ Timothy Egan	
Date: 2/27/12	



Install new head gate

DNRC School Trust Land

Install a measuring device
Replace old head gate at the river